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Liborty square us uxciting ob we do. "neighber" on Liberty Squero, you



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s.ratifying. to see chat you have adopted the concept.
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Fairbanks scales, sıगिएrib-peay 941
 At 79 Mill St:
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on the continent. It was completed in 1894 it is absolutely a tireacross from the Post Office, is the nine-story building of the International
 Clark, Ward \& Co. bankers, memiters of the New York and Boston In this country. On the strect-foor of the Equitable Life Building, at
the Devonshire and Milk St. corner, are the fine banking rooms of A ingr's "Slow to Sce Bostur."

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##  <br> 817.7233815 March 16,1981

THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF LIBERTY SQUARE: a preliminary report

Liberty Sauare lies no more than 400 feet from the area, now State Street, where John Winthrop and his Puritan settlers established themselves in 1630. At that time the Iiberty square environs were wetland: part marsh (called Governor Winthrop's marsh), part creek (Shelter Creek), and part cove (Shelter Cove. a subsidiary of Great Cove). Within a few years bridges crossed the creek and land was narcelled out.

In 1543 Governor Winthrop, Valentine Hill and others began diहging out Shelter Cove (between State and Milk Streeta) in preparation for wharves. The Book of Possessions, written about that time, listed among the property owners in the vicinity. William Davies, Iohn Vinthrop, Nathaniel Woodward, Edward Hutchinson, Ben famin Ward, John Spoore, and William Hudson, who, in 2540 , had been allowed to keep an ordinary which, in 1658, became the Bunch of Granes Tavern, the most famous of all Boston meeting and drinking establishments. Iocated on the corner of State and Kilby Streets, the Tavern flourished until its demolition around 1790. General Lafayette was banqueted there in 1784 and another man of French descent, Governor James Bowdoin, mentioned it as his home in his will of 1790 .

In 1560 Feter Oliver bought some marsh from Stephen Winthrop on the north side of Vater street crossing over Kilby.

Cliver's Dock became the chief toposraphical reference point in the area until its filling in was completed about 1800. Some time before 1722, when John Bonner issued the first map of Boston, Oliver's Dock had reduced SheIter creek and the marsh to a smail wharved inlet bridged over at Kilby Street, approximately at the north point of Liberty square. Remains of old timbers of the Dock were exposed in 1864 during the waterproofing of basements on Kilby street.

On the southwest corner of Batterymarch and Crab Alley was Iocated the Blue Bell Tevern, operated by Nathaniel Bishop in 1674. It was called the Castle Tavern in 1692.

By 1722 the area of Iiberty souare was generally defined on the south and west. Rows of houses in close proximity appear on Sonner's map. The 55 rilby/60 Congress Street block was by then well formed. Minor changes occurred between then and the 1ssuance of Carleton's map of 1797, which shows the two blocks abutting Hawes street as they are today and Liberty Square as a triangle but still bordered to the northeast by water. The last of Oliver's Jock is shown filled on Carleton's map of 1803 and on Hale's map of 1814 the Liberty Souare triangle is built up and filled land extends to India Street. The boundaries of the triangie at the junction of Kilby and Vater Streets have changed little since 1814, but that section of the square between Water and M1Ik Streets was subject to several shifts of streets and blocks until aifter the 1872 fire when the Mason Builcing was built in the same configuration as the Appleton Butling holds today.

Density increased gradually from widely separated I- and 2-story houses with gardens in the l7th century to more closely built $2-s t o r y$ houges in the early $18 t h$ century to commercial buildings in the 19th. Hale's mep of 1814 still shows open spaces between some buildings. Sanborn's 1857 atlas records mostly 4-story buildings densely packed. The 1872 fire spawned only a modest increase in average height and it was not until the early 20th century that buildings rose above 8 stories. moday building hesfhts range from 4 to 13 stories, a reasonabie scale when compared to other downtown areas.

The basic street pattern around Liberty Square is very old. Criginally mone of the streets had names, but rather descriptions of their routes. Kilby was ordered lasd out in 1649 "of 12 feet between Capt. Harcing and ililiam Davis, along straight to the bridge which the town and Mr. Hill get up." When Boston streets were named in 1708 , it was called Mackerel Lane from King (State) to Nater Street, and Cooper's Alley from Water to Milk. Its narrow dimension continued until after the fire of 1750 when it was widened, straightened, and renamed, in 7769 , for Christopher Kilby, a wealthy merchant who contributed 200 pounds to the fire victims.

Water Street, part of Springsate in the Book of Possessions. was laid out as a "hishway" through Winthrop's marsh to Bengamin Ward's wharf in 2654. Later cailed the "street that leads to Peter Oliver's Dock," it was named Water in 1708.

M11k Street, the "highway from goodman Wards to goodman

Pells" in 1553 was extended to the sea in 1673 and named Milk also in 1708.

In 1649 Benjamin Hard and neighbors built a "highway" from their houses over marsh to the bridge. This became Battermarch and part of Crab Lane in 1708.

Hawes Street appears as early as 1722 on Bonner's map as an unnamed alley, called Russell's Alley in 1798 and Hawes Street in 1828.

Liberty Sc̣uare drew its name not from American, but from French liberty. On January 24, 1793 (2 cays after the execution of Louls XVI, but unbeknown to the revellers), a huge banquet was laic in state Street near kilby in honor of the French Revolution. A 1000-nound ox was roasted whole and its gilded horns were hoisted atop a 60-foot "Iiberty Pole" on a spot from then on called liberty square. A salute of 15 guns marked the occasion. Despite later Bostonian disillusion with the brutality of the French Revolution, the name remained.

Benjamin Hard's estate, near Milk and Batterymarch, descended to Benjamin Hallowell, who ran the principal shipyard in town. Here in 1798 the fully rigfed ship Genet was launched and named in honor of the then French Minister to the U.S. The Commercial Coffeehouse, kept by William Meriam from 1817 to 1830, and later by others, succeeded the shipyarc and was, in turn, replaced by Thorndike's granite building which survived the 1872 fire. The Exchange Club now occupies the site.

A major pre-revolutionary event in Iiberty Sauare was the Stamp Act Riot of 1755 , which culminated in the razing oi the

Stamp Cffice, newly erected on the northeast corner of Kilby and Iiberty Square, and the throwing of it into Oliver's Dock. Andrew Cliver, collector of customs, was to have sold the stamps but was instead burned in effigy at Fort Hill. The Stamp Act was subsequentiy revoked.

The first Boston Directory was printed by John Norman at Oliver's Dock in 1789. It listed 1,473 names.

Nearby, on the northwest corner of Milk and Congress streets, the French chef iean Baptiste Gilbert Payplat operated a famous restaurant called "Juliens Restorator" from 1794 until his death in 1805. His wife carried on until 1824. Julien Soup orisinated bere.

Fires were a pox on Boston through much of its history and Liberty Scuare fell victim several times inciuding l711, when the Eunch of Grapes burned (rebuilt in brick in 1712) and 1760, which precinitated the widening of Mackerel Lane (Kilby). The deed recording the transfer of a parcel of land (part of the 55 Kilby Street site) from David Jeffries to William Phillips, September 2, 1763 (L 100, F 151), carries the description: "now abuttins easterly upon the new street formerly called Mackarel lane and abutting south uoon Water as said streets are ordered to be laid out by the government since the great desolation by fire in March 1750."

In 1825 fire destroyed 50 stores on Kilby street and the 1872 great fire was stopped at Ifberty square, but not before devastating all but the two buildings between Water and Milk on Batterymarch. Curiously enough the fire was stopped at the
wall of Samuel Downer's kerosene establishment on Hater street from which kerosene was said to have been first sold in Boston 50 or 60 years earlier. Of the buildings constructed 1mmediately after the fire only 3 survive: 55 Kilby and 2 others across the Square between Kilby Place and Vater street. The building at 120-130 water street is the only pre-fire remnant in the area.

## ATTACYMENTS

(I-15 are a series of maps showing the evolution of Liberty Square drawn to the scale of current BRA maps, $l^{\prime \prime}$ to 100')

1) 1981 map with 1630 , 1722 shorelines and locations of important places, buildings and events
2) $c 1645$
3) 1722 (Bonner)
4) 1728 (Burgiss)
5) 1769 (Bonner)
6) 1775 (Lt. Page)
7) 1797 (Carleton)
8) 1803 (Carleton)
9) 1814 (Hale)
10) 1819 (Hale)
11) 1844 (Boynton); 1867 (Sanborn)
12) 1874 (Hopkins)
13) 1883, 1890, 1898 (Bromley)
14) 1981
15) 1872 Fire- burned area
16) 1530 shoreline imposed on 1882 map
17) Bonner 1722
18) Burgiss 1728
19) Bonner 1759
20) Lt. Page 1775
21) Carleton 1797
22) Carleton 1803
23) Hale 1814

24A) Hale 1819
243) بale 1819
25) Boynton 1844
26) Hopkins 1874
27) Eromley 1890
28) Bromley 2898
29) Photo: Liberty Square after 1872 fire, with text
30) Dhoto: Iiberty Square after 1872 fire
31) Photo: Ifberty Square, corner Water and Batterymarch
32) Photo: Kason Builaing, 1895
33) Photo: Mason Building entrance
34.) Photo: Exchange Club, 1895

981 map
1630 SHORELINE -
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newer lands further south. One might squander considerable time in an effort to define the popular conception of the shifting boundaries of the South End, decade by decade. For the purposes of this study, I propose, after 1850, to apply it solely to the new lands south of Dover Street, developed in the area where the Neck widened as it approached Roxbury. ${ }^{3}$

These Neck lands, which in the eighteenth century were often overflowed by high tides, to the considerable inconvenience of travelers approaching Boston by land from Roxbury, only began to become useful after the Revolution when a sea wall was built


Fig. 63. The Boynton map of 1844





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